No. 335

The Christian News-Letter

Edited by KATHLEEN BLISS

13th April, 1949

NEWS-LETTER

RACIAL POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

SUPPLEMENT

THE BROADCAST PSALTER
BY
ERIC HEATON

WE WISH OUR READERS a joyous Easter. The kind of world in which Christians this year keep the feast most dear to them has never been better portrayed than by Mr. Churchill in his speech at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on March 31st. He spoke as historian, and as philosopher on the nature and destiny of modern man, rather than as politician. While he paid the highest tributes to man's skill and resourcefulness manifested in science, he made clear his faith that man's highest attainments are not in this field of discovery and invention but in the field of moral endeavour. "However much the conditions change, the supreme question is how we live and grow and bloom and die and how far each life conforms to standards which are not wholly related to space or time." The message of Easter is so often wrapped up in questions of historicity and miracle of doctrine and creed—all supremely important in their own field—that its essential simplicity is forgotten. So many webs of words have been spun that if anyone dares to say that Easter is about the ordinary stuff of life—love and greed, fidelity and betrayal, sorrow and joy, living and dying—he is accused of being trivial, banal, and untheological. Yet what does a morally sick world need more than the renewing conviction that in Christ's triumph we can look up from a world torn with sorrow, smirched with cruelty, ridden by fear, and lay hold on an undefeatable reality of love?

There has been what amounts almost to a conspiracy of silence in this country about the way in which Dr. Malan and his Government are steadily working out their policy of the complete segregation of the African and Indian communities in South Africa. The silence has recently been broken by a carefully reasoned letter to *The Times* written by Miss Margery Perham, one of the leading authorities in this country on African affairs. She points out that the Constitution and conventions of the Commonwealth forbid any official intervention by our Government, and that unofficial opinion is reluctant to seem to sit in moral judgment on those who are dealing with matters of supreme difficulty of which in this country we have no experience. But she goes on to point out that if there are strong arguments for silence, there are also strong arguments for speech. At the United Nations British representatives have to speak and vote on the future of South-West Africa. Further, this country is deeply implicated in the future of the continent of Africa, and in a dozen of its African Colonies it is pursuing a native policy the reverse of the Nationalist policy in South Africa. The successful working of that policy could be gravely imperilled if the South became " a breeding ground for racial hatred expressed in Communism or worse ". Soon a Government decision will have to be taken on the future of the three British territories bordering on the Union. It is neither right nor healthy that Government decisions should be taken in an atmosphere of an embarrassed secrecy in which the voice of informed British opinion is not heard. We cannot compel South Africa to other courses in her native policy, but at least we can try to convince by example and to persuade.

The day after the publication of this letter, the results of the South African Provincial Elections were made known. General Smuts's United Party received a total of 592,000 votes against Dr. Malan's 453,000 but although the United Party had a majority of 139,000 votes over the Nationalists alone, and of 54,000 over all other parties, 85 seats fall to the Nationalists, 78 to the United Party, 3 to Labour, and 3 to

Independents. Dr. Malan has declared that his party's majority constitutes a mandate from the people to proceed with his *apartheid* policy. That there are many Europeans in South Africa who dislike the policy of *apartheid* is shown by the substantial reduction of the margin by which the Nationalists have held many of their seats.

Under the Smuts administration, South Africa had been slowly moving in the direction of more liberal policies towards the African and Indian populations in the Union. The Malan Government has brought about a swift reversal of *direction*, though the action so far taken is small compared with what is to come. The second chapter of the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act passed in 1946 gave to Indians a measure of franchise. This was a legal recognition of the Indians as a permanent part of the community. Unfortunately Indian leaders were unwisely advised to reject the franchise, and for this reason the cancellation of the chapter granting it has been effected without much protest. The Nationalists have also withdrawn the family allowances extended to Indians by the Smuts Government. Under the Smuts Government opportunities for learning a trade were being opened to Africans. Dr. Malan first announced abrupt discontinuance, now modified to allow those in training to finish their courses. A spectacular and irritating administrative act has been the sudden withdrawal of the ancient right of African and coloured people to travel daily to their work on the suburban trains of the Cape.

The next step, and one which will evoke protest from many sections of the white population, will be the removal of all coloured people from the common roll, and the abolition of the native franchise. The way to this is not immediately open. By the Constitution a two-thirds majority of both Houses sitting together is necessary for an amendment to the franchise. When in 1936 General Hertzog removed the Cape natives from the common roll, he scrupulously observed this rule. Dr. Malan has announced that his mandate from the people justifies him in going ahead without observing it. His action is not perhaps as unscrupulously high-handed as some of his critics in this country make out,

for strong legal opinion in South Africa says that those clauses of the Statute of Westminster which were embodied in the Union Act of 1934 abolish the two-thirds majority rule. But even within the Nationalist party there are some who feel that, whatever the legal position, there is a moral obligation to stand by the promises and guarantees which brought the constituent States into the Union. The Government's working majority in the Lower House is only three and in the Senate the voting strength of Government and Opposition is equal. The Government is not strong enough to be certain of passing legislation abolishing all native representation, in the teeth of strong and vocal opposition. The next step, therefore, for which the necessary legislation is now on its way through the Union Parliament, is the incorporation of the mandated territory of South-West Africa into the Union. The new European representatives will, it is expected, consolidate the National party's position.

The question of the incorporation of South-West Africa raises knotty problems and angry passions. By treaty arrangement after the first world war the territory of German South-West Africa was made a mandated territory and the mandate was vested in South Africa. Every other mandatory power except South Africa placed its mandated territories under the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations. This South Africa refused to do, and when called upon by the United Nations at successive meetings to submit a report on the mandate she has not replied. Great Britain has abstained from voting. Within the territory steps towards assimilation have for many years been taken. European settlers have entered and occupied the land, and native tribes have been broken up and confined in small and scattered reserves. The case against South Africa that she has betrayed a moral trust in her treatment of the native populations is black.

But when that sentence has been written, what follows? Various groups in this country are pressing for action against South Africa in the Trusteeship Council. Yet it is well to remember that the object of any well organized public agitation is not to blow off moral steam, but to achieve an

end, and therefore certain questions need to be asked. South-West Africa is the only mandated territory in the world which is contiguous with the mandatory power. What steps are we prepared to take to back our protests? Secondly, does our moral revulsion from the race policies of the National party in South Africa lead us to see the Trusteeship Council through rosy spectacles? How much confidence can we put in the judgment or in the effective action that can be taken by an international organization in which high politics between two contending world blocs are far more in evidence than effective concern for the populations whose fate is being discussed? Thirdly, it is perfectly clear that to South Africa South-West Africa is the symbol of a menace, first of German power and now of possible communist infiltration under the guise of internationalism. If her Government is set upon a policy of repression within, she is not more but less likely to tolerate a different and possibly fermenting régime on her very borders. Those whose political judgment is that the half-completed assimilation of South-West Africa into the Union cannot be stopped, and that the question of South Africa's treatment of native populations must be treated as a whole and subjected to criticism and protest as a whole, are not necessarily cynics.

Of the greatest concern to Christians here is the attitude of fellow-Christians within the Union to the policy of *apartheid*. The Roman Catholic Church does not practice segregation in its own life: the Mass is open to all, and its attitude is clear. The five Churches which work together in the Christian Council of South Africa (Anglican, Methodist, Congregationalist, Baptist, and Presbyterian) have protested in the strongest fashion. A recent request that the Prime Minister should receive a deputation of their members on the issue of *apartheid* has been refused in the strongest terms. These Churches all contain native members and adherents, but their total European membership does not equal that of the Dutch Reformed Church, of which a million Europeans are members. The racial theories of some of the Nationalists now in power derive from sheer Nazism: but

others who are members or supporters of the party, especially in rural areas, get their notions of *apartheid* from a literalist interpretation of the Old Testament. They talk about the sons of Ham, destined to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, but they do not therefore act like Nazis or talk like Nazis. Their dealings are often marked by a simple Christian pietism and charity which transcends their doctrines. Many a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church works in some voluntary organization or is a member of some council to promote racial understanding.

The unanswered question is whether liberal minded men and Christians within and outside the Nationalist party can hold back the forces making for sheer repression which derive their strength from playing on the racial fears of a white minority. The hideous lesson of the Durban riots is that it may already be too late to turn the rising tide of African nationalist feeling away from a violent response to repressive treatment. It makes the vigorous pursuit of other policies elsewhere in Africa the more urgent, and ought to bring to the Christian conscience the searching question why it is that neither Government services in Africa nor missionary societies can get the recruits they need for a task of such supreme importance.

1549—1949

The quatercentenary of the publication of the first Prayer Book of King Edward VI will be celebrated this year on Sunday, June 19th. The English Prayer Book has played a part in the life and thought of the nation and of all English-speaking peoples second only to that of the English Bible. Its glories of language and thought have made it to succeeding generations a vehicle of worship and aspiration: yet it is proper also to remember that it was the enforcement of the use of the Book of Common Prayer which gave rise to the dissenting minorities and hence to some of our modern Free Churches. We can at the same time rejoice that old bitternesses have so died away that Free Churchmen in private practice and in public worship pay the Prayer Book the supreme tribute of unacknowledged quotation.

But even those who hold the whole in deepest affection must at times find themselves asking whether in parts the ancient language and forms of thought do not obscure rather than illuminate the truth. No part of the Prayer Book raises this question so insistently as the Psalter. The difficulties which attend the path of those who attempt to make changes are well known. Even if new wordings have no doctrinal significance, it cannot be known in advance whether they will stand the test of constant use. In consultation with scholars and musicians the B.B.C. has published a selection of seventy psalms and twelve canticles. It will be used daily in the broadcast Service.

We publish as a Supplement a talk given in the Third Programme by the Dean of Caius College, Cambridge, who is already known as a lively and stimulating broadcaster of talks on the Old Testament to the sixth forms of schools.

Readers will notice that he draws his apt quotations on the use of the Psalter from one of the most distinguished of non-conformist divines, Dr. Isaac Watts, the tercentenary of whose birth was celebrated last year. There are at least three traditions in the use of the psalms in public worship in the Churches of these islands. In the Anglican Church the psalms, in Coverdale's translation, are regularly sung or said as acts of worship: they are never read as Old Testament lessons, and consequently many Anglican worshippers do not know them as a part of Old Testament history or hear them read in the language of the Authorized Version. The Free Churches almost reverse this practice: the singing of the psalms is not a regular part of worship, but the reading of them as Old Testament lessons is common. The Scottish Church has yet another tradition in the regular and much-loved use of metrical settings of the psalms in worship. So far as we are aware, the distinctive merits of the three traditions, and the effect they have on the worshippers' view of the Old Testament, have never been the subject of ecumenical study, though they might well be.

Kathleen Bliss

THE BROADCAST PSALTER

By ERIC HEATON

"HERE," wrote Isaac Watts, "I may with Courage address myself to the Heart and Conscience of many pious and observing Christians, and ask them Whether they have not found a most divine pleasure in Singing, when the Words of the Psalm have happily expressed their Frame of Soul? Have you not felt a new Joy spring within you, when you could speak your own Desires and Hopes, your own Faith, Love and Zeal in the Language of the holy Psalmist?

"But (he adds) on a sudden, the Clerk has proposed the next Line to your Lips with dark Sayings and Prophecies, with Burnt-Offerings or Hyssop, with New-Moons and Trumpets, and Timbrels in it, with *Confession of Sins* which you never committed, with *Complaints of Sorrows* which you never felt, *cursing such Enemies* as you never had, giving *Thanks for such Victories* as you never obtained, or leading you to speak in your own Persons, of Things, Places, and Actions, that you never knew. And how have all your Souls been discomposed at once . . . you have been baulked and ashamed, and knew not whether it were best to be silent, or to follow on with the Clerk and the Multitude, and sing with cold Devotion and perhaps in Darkness too, without Thought or meaning."

Not a few clergymen have themselves observed what he calls elsewhere "the dull Indifference, and negligent and the thoughtless Air, that sits upon the Faces of a whole Assembly, while the Psalm is on their Lips".

The *Broadcast Psalter* has been designed especially to obviate the dull indifference of the very large assembly which listens to the morning service broadcast daily from the studio. Its purpose is explicitly a pastoral one and it must therefore be judged on practical grounds—as a piece of experimental divinity.

The Daily Service must reach thousands of people who are almost totally ignorant of the period in which the psalms were composed. Without some knowledge of early Hebrew history, of the place-names and peoples of Palestine, of the traditional

acrificial worship of its sanctuaries, of the national hopes, fears, orrows—and most of all the national idiom of its inhabitants, great number of the psalms must of necessity be very imperectly understood. All those who hold the view that there can e no sincerity in worship without a fair measure of understanding, will agree that the use of the whole Psalter without iscrimination raises practical problems which demand action.

Such action has been taken by the editors of this new Psalter. hey have made a selection of seventy psalms or portions of salms, which they consider will be found at once easy to understand, rewarding to use in worship, and representative of Hebrew piety at its best. The selected seventy have been ubmitted to a thorough and scholarly revision with three main ims in view: intelligibility; suitability for singing; fidelity o the meaning of the Hebrew original. The assumption hroughout has been that the language of Coverdale should be eft undisturbed whenever possible, and that all new renderings hould be phrased in an idiom which blends with that of the Prayer Book version. One's immediate impression is that the evision has been carried out in so delicate and judicious a manner, that even those who have long known and loved Coverdale's version will only rarely be aware of the changes.

WIDER ISSUES RAISED BY THE PROJECT

The *Broadcast Psalter* is a selection of seventy psalms. Since here is no suggestion that the editors are proposing a new canon of Holy Scripture or a new revision of the Prayer Book, it would be possible to take the view that the present publication might well be judged on its merits and left to sink or swim.

It is, however, impossible to forget that the psalms now evised and the psalms omitted have been used in worship (both n the Jewish synagogue and the Christian church) for two housand years. There is scarcely a book in the New Testament without a quotation from the Psalter, and the psalms provided one of the main elements in the worship of the early Church. A council of Toledo in the seventh century ruled that " no one henceforth shall be promoted to any ecclesiastical dignity who does not know the whole Psalter ". Writers from every age bear witness to the central place which this " Bible in miniature "

(to use Luther's expression) has held in Christian practice and affection.[1] Inevitably, therefore, it is with grave misgivings that one begins to examine such a work as the selection we are considering. It contains seventy psalms. Why only seventy ? Is it not possible to interpret the other eighty in such a way that the Christian conscience is not violated ?

The whole Psalter has been maintained in Christian tradition partly by sheer conservatism, partly by a belief in its verbal infallibility and unique inspiration, and partly by the expert use of deliberate interpretation.

Interpretation falls into one of two contrasted types—the allegorical and the historical.

The *allegorical* method of interpretation is familiar from the chapter headings in the Authorized Version of the Old Testament. It is in essence a device used for combining an ancient tradition with a current belief, without appearing to sacrifice either. It was a popular Hellenistic method of making the behaviour of the ancient gods tolerable to a more sensitive civilization. It was the device used by the Jewish philosopher Philo in his efforts to commend the Hebrew Scriptures to the cultivated pagan world of his day. It was the instrument employed by the writers of the New Testament for combining the ancient faith of Israel with the gospel of Christ. It has been (and in some circles still is) the bond which unites the psalms of Israel with the dogmatic tradition and worship of the Church.

Theologians at the present day are sharply divided, as they have been on and off ever since the debates between the schools of Antioch and Alexandria in the first five centuries, on the question as to whether allegorical interpretation is legitimate or not. Its usefulness to those who are *bound* to use the whole Psalter cannot be questioned. The issue is whether a method, which appears to be fundamentally indifferent to the plain and literal sense of the text, can properly be called a method of *interpretation*. The critics of allegorizing justly point out that it is but a short step from using a method to make something mean something else to using the same method to make something mean anything.

[1] See Kirkpatrick's introduction to the Psalms in the *Cambridge Bible*.

The other mode of interpretation—the *historical*—consists rincipally in exercising a high degree of historical scholarship ıd historical imagination, with the aim of discerning the per-ıanent spiritual significance of the psalms in the ancient forms ıd unfamiliar idiom in which it is now embodied. The historical ıethod was given a new impetus by the rise of Biblical criticism, ıd by the fresh interest in Hebrew and Christian origins which encouraged. The discovery, for instance, of Babylonian and ,gyptian psalms, dating from a period before that in which the Iebrew psalms were composed, is just one of the many factors rhich have caused students to modify the traditional view of iblical inspiration and to state more carefully their belief in the salter's unique significance. In short, more and more scholars ave reached a position like that of St. Chrysostom in his com-ıent on the sixth chapter of Isaiah: "There are those who say ıese things are symbols of future mysteries . . . *but we keep hold f the history.*" Keeping hold of the history and finding revelation ıd spiritual significance in the plain and literal sense has become ıe grand alternative to the allegorical method.

At this point, however, it is only just to observe what the dvocates of historical exegesis sometimes forget. The psalms ı the Bible are one thing and the psalms in the Prayer Book are ɔmething rather different. Our worship is certainly historical, ut it is *at the same time* a present expression of our Christian ıith. It is, therefore, not enough to understand the psalms istorically. We must recite them with personal faith, and this compatible with a fidelity to the past, only when we are using ıose psalms which have not been made old by the newness of ıe gospel.

Whatever the merits and demerits of these two methods of ıterpretation, neither really meets the practical problem of the rdinary worshipper. He lacks both skill in allegorical inter-retation and historical learning. If, as appears to be the case, ıe two main types of interpretation are possible only to a sophisti-ıted élite, then it must be frankly acknowledged that some quite ifferent solution of the pastoral problem must be sought.

In the face of the present deadlock, the compilers of the *roadcast Psalter* have boldly made a selection of seventy psalms

which require the very minimum of interpretation, and yet at the same time offer the maximum spiritual and moral assistance to the worshipper. That alone ought to soften our instinctive misgivings.

It is, however, possible to go further and claim that this project, so far from representing a makeshift, stands in the great liturgical tradition of the Church. When the late Bishop Frere, Catholic Churchman and eminent liturgist, published his own selection of psalms in 1925, he maintained that he was reverting to what he called the ancient liturgical principle of selection, common alike to the ancient breviaries and modern Free Church hymn books. To one with no claim to any special knowledge of liturgiology, the idea of selecting psalms suitable for public worship seems to be largely a matter of common sense. We know from the Mishnah that psalms were selected for special days in the Synagogue, and it is highly unlikely that here (any more than in the modern synagogue), *all* the psalms were sung in public worship. In the ancient practice of the Church, psalms were similarly selected for special occasions, and again it is highly unlikely that the average worshipper ever used the *whole* Psalter. It is, of course, true that the whole Psalter used to be read " in course " by monks and the clergy, within some such fixed period as a week or a fortnight. This, however, was a practice for the élite, and even then, it was subordinate to the tradition of having special psalms for special occasions.

The time came when the English Church adopted the practice of reciting the whole Psalter " in course " with the very minimum of selection. Recently, however, there has been a marked tendency within the Church of England to return to the older practice and to name more and more special psalms for special occasions. The system, for instance, proposed in 1920 and now very largely used, appoints special psalms for every Sunday of the year. The revisers, however, were still wedded to the monastic and clerical notion that the *whole* Psalter should be used and so (with seven exceptions) all the psalms were given a place on one or more Sundays in the year. The principle of selection had, however, gained recognition and in the 1928 Prayer Book, the Minister is specifically allowed to substitute for the appointed psalms one or more psalms chosen as being appropriate for

ervices on special occasions. This permission opened (or half-pened) the door to freedom of selection.[1]

This new *Broadcast Psalter*, it would appear, has taken the ath which the Church of England has seen but has so far been eluctant to pursue. If a common-sense response to pastoral eeds is the heart of ancient liturgical tradition, then it is difficult o deny that this modest production intended for the ordinary vorshipper is in line with the hallowed practice of the past.

HOW SUCCESSFULLY HAVE THE EDITORS MADE THEIR CHOICE?

Of the seventy psalms selected for this collection, fifty-four re printed in full (except for minor changes) and sixteen are portions of psalms. There is, of course, nothing new in the nethod of making extracts from psalms for liturgical purposes. The Hebrew Psalter itself shows that the Jews were accustomed o doing exactly the same thing. Psalm 70, for instance, looks ike a liturgical extract from Psalm 40; Psalm 53 is a duplicate of Psalm 14 without its vindictive conclusion; and Psalm 108 s a combination (almost certainly for use in worship) of five verses from Psalm 57 and eight verses from Psalm 60. The Church has always followed the same practice and it has left its mark in the English Prayer Book.

The psalms and portions of psalms omitted by the editors of he *Broadcast Psalter* may be grouped under six heads.

(1) The Psalms in which the sentiment is too personal for public repetition—for example Psalm 71 (the psalm of old age) and Psalm 35 ("Plead thou my cause, O Lord . . ."), which comes near to the poignancy of some of the anguished confessions of the prophet Jeremiah. I simply cannot believe that such intimate poems were ever intended for anything but private meditation. I am glad that they have been left out of this collection, just as I am glad to know that I may find them in the Bible.

(2) A number of celebrated historical psalms (106 and 108 for instance) have not been selected, partly, I suppose, because (like the wisdom psalms) they are too long for practical purposes, and partly because their detailed references to obscure events, people and places are utterly bewildering to the unlearned. It may be great fun for public-school boys to proclaim that Moab is their

[1] See W. K. Lowther Clarke, *The Prayer Book of 1928 Reconsidered*, p. 63.

wash-pot, but such utterances hardly constitute a devotional exercise for mature people. The present selection is really most impressive for its skilful avoidance of those resounding but esoteric proper names which successfully lend an air of mystery to church services. A knowledge of a dozen or so names (Jacob, Zion, Jordan, etc.) is all the new Psalter demands.

(3) And then there are the psalms which appear on the surface to be altogether "smug". In using Psalm 26, for example, the worshipper must say: "I have not dwelt with vain persons: neither will I have fellowship with the deceitful. I have hated the congregation of the wicked: and will not sit among the ungodly." You will find the same sort of thing in Psalms 7, 17, 44, and sections of 119. It is more than likely that some of these protestations of innocence represent a traditional quasi-legal form used at the sanctuaries by persons who had been falsely accused of some offence. They may even be the pleas of men who considered that they were suffering more than their unrighteousness warranted. Such possibilities are important for the student of the Old Testament, but they do not mitigate the embarrassment of Christians in our own day, when they are called upon to recite words which, if words mean anything, suggest a loathsome sort of self-righteousness.

(4) Some passages in the psalms quite explicitly deny the possibility of fellowship with God after death. A verse in Psalm 6 is characteristic: "For in death no man remembereth thee: and who will give thee thanks in the pit?" Now if church services were classes for the comparative study of religion, there would be a place for evidence like this. But they are not. It is quite true that life after death plays hardly any part in the religion of the Old Testament, but this fact needs to be understood, first in the context of the Hebrews' whole approach to life, and then in the context of Christian belief. To state the matter baldly is to give entirely the wrong impression both of Judaism and of Christianity. In Psalms 6, 30, 88, and 115, the matter *is* stated baldly; these pieces are therefore misleading and should be omitted. "By keeping too close to *David* in the House of God, the Vail of *Moses* is thrown over our Hearts." Our editors have wisely heeded the warning of Watts.

(5) By far the greatest number of the eighty psalms not included in the present collection spring from the bitter experience of persecution. The psalmists, despite their many great virtues, were not men who suffered in silence. Their adversaries, so often and so explicitly cursed in the most barbaric terms, are sometimes ghostly demons, sometimes individual enemies, and sometimes hostile nations. With an extremely cautious and not very consistent hand, the revisers of the 1928 Prayer Book have racketed for omission the more colourful of the maledictions, but by no means all. Now the vast majority of these imprecatory passages may be explained by the student of Hebrew religion in such a way as to clear their authors of some of the worst charges of vindictiveness. The student will often come to the conclusion that the maledictions represent not primitive theology, but something more like primitive medicine—curses uttered not against human beings but against the demons of disease. But this possible explanation is not of the *slightest* use to the average worshipper. Even if he can appreciate an exposition of the demonology, he is hardly likely to be able to use it spiritually, and the chances are that he will forget it; and he may *still* be asked to sing words like: "Blessed shall he be that taketh thy children: and throweth them against the stones." As Archbishop Davidson acknowledged during the Convocation debates on the use of the Psalter (held throughout the period of the first world war), there are still Christians—and intelligent Christians—who are prepared to borrow such words and apply them, apparently with the authority of the Bible, to their personal and national enemies. It is the clear duty of the Church to protect such weaker brethren from declining into sub-Christian vindictiveness and to spare its more sensitive members the horror of singing with their lips what they must reject in their hearts.

(6) Inevitably, the psalms abound in allusions to the sacrificial worship of the Temple, since it was probably as part of the Temple liturgy that the psalms were first used in public worship. These passages about the ritual slaughtering of animals are not particularly difficult to comprehend historically, but they *are* peculiarly difficult to use in worship with any sense of reality. The editors of the new psalter have very properly omitted these references. They come out of the text without leaving any

perceptible gap and spare us the patent difficulty of addressing God in terms like these: "I will offer unto thee fat burnt sacrifices, with the incense of rams: I will offer bullocks and goats." This is not the normal Christian way of making a personal thanksgiving and there is no good reason for continuing to suggest that it is.

CONCLUSION

The selection now offered to the public is a most remarkable and valuable practical demonstration of the majesty and profundity of Hebrew faith at its best. The Psalter's permanent claim to our reverence at long last stands out in a clear and unadulterated light for the ordinary worshipper. Any selection must, of course, represent an interpretation of some kind, and it is this which may arouse misgivings. I can only express my own view that the editors are not grinding any theological axe, and that such interpretation as there is will be found only in the criteria by which the selection has been made. These criteria seem to be determined by an extensive knowledge of what ordinary people are able to use in worship, by a sound pastoral insight, and by the authentic spirit of the gospels. Only those psalms have been selected which speak for themselves. What they do speak, and will enable the thousands who will use them to speak, are the great themes of the Hebrew-Christian tradition —faith and forgiveness, judgment and mercy, joy and thanksgiving, God's righteousness, providence, and peace.

In my judgment, the *Broadcast Psalter* will undoubtedly achieve the explicit and limited purpose for which it was undertaken. In the hope that its potential influence for good may one day extend far beyond the studio, I will presume to append to its preface the words with which Isaac Watts took leave of his *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. He wrote: "If the Lord, who inhabits the Praises of *Israel*, shall refuse to smile upon this Attempt for the Reformation of Psalmody amongst the Churches, yet I humbly hope that his Blessed Spirit will make these Composures useful to private Christians."

Subscriptions—£1 ($4.00 in U.S.A. and Canada) for one year, 10s. 6d. for six months Great Britain and Ireland only). Single copies, 10d.; reduction for quantities.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—
THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 20 BALCOMBE STREET, DORSET SQUARE, LONDON, N.W.1

Published by the Christian Frontier Trust, Ltd., and printed in Great Britain by the Church Army Press, Cowley, Oxford.